

April 11, 2023

Subject: Letter of Support for Montgomery Parks natural resources stewardship

Dear Mr. Elrich and Councilmembers,

I am writing asking that you full support Montgomery Parks' vegetation management program. This year's operating budget includes three career positions dedicated to strengthening the department's Vegetation Ecology and Management Unit's efforts for inventory, monitoring, and management of habitat, including increased support of down county Weed Warrior efforts and environmental equity focus areas.

As our natural communities struggle to keep up with the stressors of climate change and urbanization, it is increasingly critical that we do all we can to ensure our natural areas are not overcome by non-native invasive plants (NNI's). These NNI's outcompete and displace our native species, reduce food sources for our wildlife, including birds and pollinators, and negatively impact the health and resiliency of our native forest communities.

Additionally, it is critical to monitor the effects of the restoration work County staff are conducting, so they can continuously adapt and improve their management strategies. Thus, having sufficient staff to for inventory and monitoring is imperative.

By fully funding the Montgomery Parks vegetation management program, you will not only be ensuring the long-term viability of our natural communities, but also providing healthy ecosystems for our residents to enjoy and explore, a refuge for our human communities to flourish in, even in light of a changing climate. Please allow Montgomery Parks to continue to steward our natural resources, without cutting their budget, so that we can all benefit from their tireless stewardship of our natural areas.

Sincerely,



Deborah Landau, Ph.D.  
Director of Ecological Management